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Banister's Catalogue of Virginia Plants.

Jacques Philippe Cornut's *Historia Plantarum Canadensium*, published in Paris in 1635, is undoubtedly one of the earliest records of North American plants. This work contains descriptions and illustrations of many species, the geographical range of which include not only New France, but also New England and the territory southward to Virginia, and the Carolinas. We could mention several species which are common or at least not rare within the borders of Maryland and Virginia, but will content ourselves with two striking examples, namely: "*Filix baccifera*" (= *Cystopteris bulbifera* L.) and the strikingly beautiful "*Adiantum americanum*" (= *Adiantum pedatum* L.) the latter being one of our characteristic ferns of low, deciduous woods.

In 1640, Parkinson published his *Theatrum Botanicum*, wherein he records many plants from Virginia. We may cite again *Adiantum fruticosum americanum*. The weird, but beautiful *Juniperus virginiana*, the characteristic ornament of the lower Potomac region and elsewhere is mentioned in this work. Virginian plants are mentioned in many other works, but the earliest *list* of plants from our region is contained in Ray's *Historia Plantarum* (vol. 2; pp. 1926-1928, 1688). This list is known as Banister's Catalogue and is of special interest to those who devote themselves to the Botany of the middle Atlantic States.

Of Banister we know very little except that he lived and labored in Virginia. Ray pays him a tribute in his *Historia Plantarum* (vol. 3; IV, 1704); "D. Joannes Banister primi sub-sellii Botanicus, Vir magni nominis & famae, quem Historiae hujus initio laudavimus. Virginiae ubi per plures annos sedem fixit, plantas mira industria indagavit & descripsit, rarioresque propria manu ad vivum delineavit; infelici tandem & deplorando casu antequam Historiam Naturalem istius provinciae, quam prae manibus habuit, perfecerat, dum rupes incautius scanderet, rebus humanis exemptus est."

A brief sketch of Banister's life was given also by Pulteney (*Hist. & Biogr. Sketch* 2:55-57, 1790).

In examining the catalogue anyone who is somewhat familiar with the plants of our region would at once recognize many of the species. The task of identifying a number of them, however,

would be a difficult one, for it would require a careful study of the prominent authors of that period. The method of description of two centuries ago presupposes an intimate knowledge of the older masters, and their terminology. This is readily seen if we examine Banister's second species: *Alsine Becabungae folio*. The expression serves both as a name and as a description, wherein a knowledge of another plant, *Veronica beccabunga*, is prerequisite.

Among the species which are readily recognized, we may mention a few; *Castanea pumila racemoso fructu parvo in singulis capsulis echinatis unico*. The Chinquapin, is our common *Castanea pumila*; *Clematis purpurea repens petalis florum coriaceis* is *Clematis viorna* L., while *Clematis erecta, humilis non ramosa, foliis subrotundis, flore unico ochroleuco* is *Clematis ochroleuca*.

Dens caninus flore luteo which is blooming now in our beautiful woods, is none other than the dog's tooth violet—*Erythronium americanum*. The old name of this plant has evidently survived in popular nomenclature.

Filix mas rachi seu nervo medio alato is evidently *Phegopteris hexagonoptera* and the very interesting little walking fern, *Camptosorus rhizophyllus* cannot be disguised under its Banisterian name—*Phyllitis parva saxatilis per summitates folii prolifera*.

Banister mentions all of our species of Araceae except the very few rare forms.

The genus *Quercus* is interesting. Here we find a clear case of popular names translated into Latin: "*Quercus varia species*, 1. *Pumila*, 2. *Alba*, 3. *Rubra*, 4. *Hispanica*, 5. *Castaneae folio*, 6. *Lini aut Salicis foliis*, 7. *Fruticosa*."

Ulmus fructu Lupulino is our common Iron-wood—*Ostrya virginiana*.

In the December number of *Torreya** Dr. Barnhart, discussing "Some American Botanists of Former Days," reproduces for the "first page of Banister's Catalogue" what really is the title page of the second volume of the "Flora Virginica" of Gronovius. That the reproduction in *Torreya* is not Banister's first page seems self-evident, and we wonder how such a mistake was allowed in print. We herewith reproduce part of the real "first page."

* *Torreya*, Vol. 9, No. 12, p. 243.

E Catalogo huc transmissio Anno 1680. quem composuit
eruditissimus Vir & consummatissimus Botanicus
D. *Johannes Banister* Plantarum a seipso in Virginia
observatarum.

A.
Alfne Spergula latifolia reptans
Becabungæ folio.

Althæa lutea Pimpinellæ majoris folio, floribus
parvis, feminibus rostratis. Folia hujus plantæ
pediculis infident.

Althæa magna Aceris folio, cortice Cannabino,
floribus parvis femina rotatim in summitate
caulium, lingula lingulis cuticulis rostratis co-
operta ferens.

Althæa magna quinquecapularis, cortice Can-
nabino, foliis integris subtus albicantibus, flo-
ribus magnis ex fundo saturatè rubro albis.

Alth. magna quinquecapularis, cortice Canna-
bino, foliis Malvarum modo divisis, subtus vi-
ridibus.

Ambrosia inodora foliis non divisis.

gigantea inodora foliis asperis trifidis.
Anchusa lutea minor, quam Indi Paccoon vocant
seipfos ea pingentes.

Anemone latifolia sylvestris alba.

Apocynum erectum non ramosum folio subrotun-
do, umbellis florum rubris.

Apoc. erect. non ramof. latiore folio, umbellis
florum albicantibus.

Apoc. erect. minus. umbella florum candida

Conyza coerulea acris Americana.

Cucumis fructu minimo viridi, ad maturitatem
perducto nigricante: Fructus Bryoniæ alba
baccâ non multo major est, cujus primo aspectu
speciem esse putaveram

D.

Dens caninus flore luteo.

Digitalis flore pallido transparenti, folus & caule
molli hirsutie imbutis.

Digit: rubra minor, labiis florum patulis, folus
parvis angustis.

Digit. lutea elatior Jacex nigræ foliis.

lutea altera, foliis tenuius dissectis thecis
florum foliaceis.

parva comis coccineis.

E.

Eryngium campestre Yuccæ foliis, spinis tenellis
hinc inde marginibus appositis.

Euonymus capsulis eleganter bullatis.

F.

Filix mas foliis integris auriculatis.

mas rachi seu nervo medio alato

femina foliis per margines pulverulentis